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Judy Clibborn

2006 Session Highlights

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

We just wrapped up a short session in Olympia, but the list of incredible successes for the state is anything but short. I was delighted to work on bipartisan breakthroughs on everything from medical malpractice to civil rights to unemployment insurance.

I'd like to thank all of you who have written, called, or visited with me. Your input is very important and has led to great accomplishments for our community. And it's why I've made it my highest priority to focus on your biggest concerns – transportation solutions, education support, and answers to our health care challenges.

Inside you'll find some of the highlights from this past session. There isn't enough room for everything, so if you would like to know more, please write or call. I treasure the time I spend talking with you about how to make our communities – and our state – a better place for all of us.

Thank you for allowing me to represent you in Olympia,

Representative Judy Clibborn

Keeping our roads safe and our economy moving

Here in the 41st District, we face some of the toughest transportation challenges in the state. As a member of the House Transportation Committee, I'm working on solutions developed by both sides of the aisle.

This year, we passed a Transportation Budget that supplements the Transportation Partnership Act of 2005, as affirmed by the voters in November. This budget improves safety, preserves at-risk roads and bridges and helps the state's economy.

One of the projects included in the budget allows the Puget Sound region to work together to find a comprehensive solution to our transportation needs.



We provide \$750,000 for regional transportation governance improvements to restore accountability and public confidence in the Central Puget Sound's transportation system, which has suffered from inefficiency, service duplication and bureaucratic in-fighting. We also provide \$300,000 to help the regional transportation investment district (RTID) develop its plan to be placed on the November, 2007 ballot.

Locally, I helped secure funding to:

- Continue improving the I-405 and I-90 corridors
- Improve local highways, like State Routes 169 and 900
- Provide resources for transit options to clear up gridlocked roads

Coal Creek Parkway

In addition to the other local projects, I'm very proud that we've funded the final phase of improvements to the Coal Creek Parkway. They call it the "golden spike" funding, which ensures the project will be completed bringing the state, federal, and city money together. This is an important project for the district since 405 and the viaduct projects will push cars onto this route.

Helping students succeed

As technology improves and distant nations become virtual neighbors, the definition of a competitive workforce becomes harder to determine. We do know, however, that if our kids are going to compete globally, then we need to give them the skills to succeed. That means improving scores and fostering the next generation of American workers in science, math, and engineering.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

This year's class of high school sophomores are the first group required to pass the WASL to graduate. In order to help them succeed, we took additional measures to develop a fair test and get help to those who need it.

- \$28 million was allocated for learning assistance to pass the WASL, including summer school, Saturday class or after-school classes.
- Alternatives to the WASL were authorized to create fair methods for students able to succeed, but not pass the traditional test.

Early Education

Led by Governor Gregoire, we created the Department of Early Learning, consolidating several child care and early learning programs into one place to create an integrated and seamless approach to education.

- HB 2964 created the department and builds on the \$90 million the Gates Foundation has pledged to early learning in the state.

Overall, the 2005-07 Legislature increased state funding for Washington's public schools by \$1.45 billion – about \$1,500 per student.



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Bringing health care costs back down to Earth

It isn't surprising that when I talk to citizens across the district about jobs and the economy, health care ends up in the discussion. It's all interconnected - kids in school can't learn if they are sick... Parents who become ill can't work everyday to make a living... Days at work are missed, productivity declines, and so on. That's why this session we passed bipartisan legislation to make health care better and more affordable.



Small businesses today feel the crunch of health care costs more than anyone. They help keep our economy moving, yet individually they face hardships larger companies don't.

To help these businesses, I co-sponsored legislation creating the Small Business Health Insurance Partnership program. Starting in 2007, this new voluntary partnership will blend employer, employee and state dollars to help small businesses offer good health coverage from the private market for their low-wage employees. The size of the state subsidy will depend on the employee's income. This is a new choice for businesses, not a mandate, and there is no business red tape or paperwork, since the employee makes the application.

Health Care for Part-Time Employees

I was the prime-sponsor of HB 2972, which helps part-time workers get access to health care. Some people work several part-time jobs so they can earn enough money to support their family—they need and deserve medical coverage.

With this bill, each employer pays a small share of the worker's overall coverage. By spreading out the cost, businesses can employ part-time workers and afford to help them get health benefits.

Medical Malpractice Fight Ended

For years, the battle over a solution to the medical malpractice problem ended in stalemate with nothing accomplished. This year Democrats and Republicans worked out a compromise, breaking through partisan divides.

The voters of our state made it clear that they did not want an issue as serious as medical malpractice decided by special interest groups. They wanted the Legislature to find a real solution with everyone at the table. I'm pleased to report we now have that compromise. It centers on patient safety and the prevention of medical errors first—not the competing interests of doctors or lawyers.

The reforms will improve patient safety, enhance insurance company liability reporting and provide some improvements to how cases are handled in court. It'll help good doctors find insurance at a fair cost. But most importantly, it'll help reduce the number of medical errors in the first place.



Nursing Home Bed Tax Eliminated

Balancing a budget on the backs of those in retirement is unfair and unsound policy. To alleviate at least one concern for nursing home residents, we eliminated what has become known as the bed tax.

Clean air and water – for today and tomorrow

In the past two sessions, we made some of the greatest strides towards a cleaner environment and sustainable future than ever before. This year we built on landmark legislation passed in 2005 to reduce pollution, as well as consume less fuel. We followed up this year with more laws, leading the nation in a cleaner, more energy-independent tomorrow:



Puget Sound: If Puget Sound is to remain pristine for generations to come, we need to take action to prevent further damage. I voted for legislation investing \$14 million to begin clean-up, as well as cutting down on pollution from septic tanks. Additional regulations on oil tankers were needed for our Sound, so this year I voted for strengthening protection rules, sending a clear message to Congress that we won't allow extra tanker traffic in our waters!

Renewable Energy: We face an energy crisis in our state and across the country, both in terms of supply and cost. Developing biodiesel, and other alternative fuels, is one solution for future clean-energy supplies. To jumpstart investments in biodiesel, we created a market for it with SB 6508, which creates the Energy Freedom Fund to research and develop renewable energy.

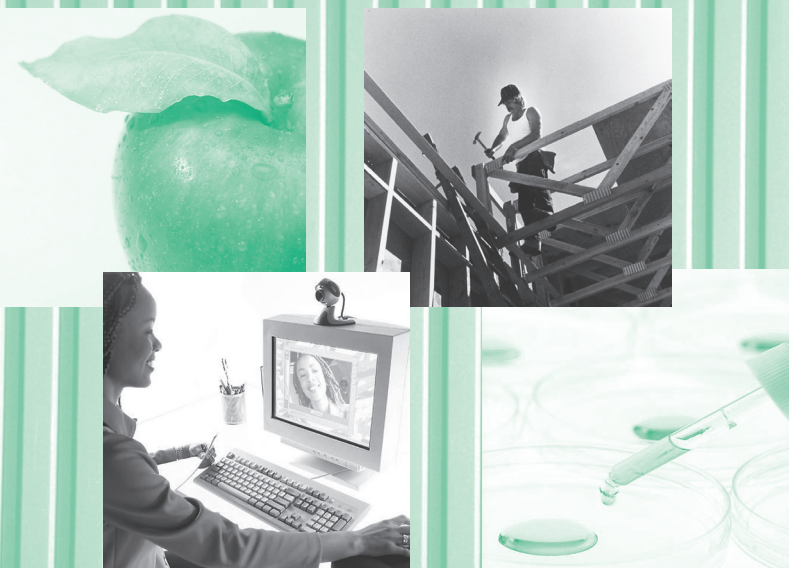
A finite amount of fossil fuel remains in the world and the cost for the remaining supply will only go up. It has become clear that the states will have to lead the charge because the answers won't come from the federal level. We need to start here in Washington to develop alternative energies. Not only will that lead to a cleaner environment, it will mean that our state will attract and remain at the forefront of any new technological advances, placing us at an economic advantage.

Electronic Waste: If you're like my family, then those old TVs and outdated computers can pile up in the garage until we figure out something to do with them. Unfortunately, e-waste, as it's called, leaks harmful chemicals that dumps aren't meant to handle. A computer monitor can contain up to ten pounds of lead alone, not to mention other poisons like mercury.

Thanks to a new program I supported this year, we can now recycle e-waste responsibly and cut down on harmful toxins entering our land, air, and water. This new program recycles products at no cost to the state and at no cost to small businesses, non-profits, and schools. The revenue for the recycling comes from retailers and manufacturers and is a shared responsibility approach.



Building a strong economy for everyone



Washington's incredible economy is driven by its diversity, from farming to software, as well as the businesses and people working hard every day. It's our job in Olympia to make sure we're investing the people's money wisely. That sometimes means providing strategic investments and exemptions when necessary to foster the industries that provide excellent job opportunities to our citizens.

With this budget, we encourage job creation and retention throughout the state with several targeted investments in key industries:

- semiconductor manufacturing industry,
- aluminum manufacturers,
- biotechnology and medical device manufacturing, and
- Many small contractors in the aerospace industry.

We also help small businesses meet their challenges:

Tax relief for small businesses

We gave relief from the early tax deadline and penalty to small businesses already burdened with paperwork.

Small business personal property tax exemption

We know small owner-operated businesses often work on a tight margin, so we raised from \$3,000 to \$15,000 the personal property tax exemption for work items (such as office equipment and computers).

Creating the Washington Manufacturing Services

Small manufacturers must compete in the global economy. We re-established a nonprofit program designed to help those businesses retain and create jobs.

Support for worker training programs

We helped businesses with 50 or fewer employees compete by investing in training for their employees. The bill grants a B&O tax credit equal to 50 percent of the job training costs, up to \$10,000 per year.

Small business services grant program

A competitive grant program we expanded will boost service and training activities to help small businesses grow.